

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-14 ISO-00 IO-14 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

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R 211219Z AUG 74

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9788

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT ALGIERS

USUN NEW YORK NY 410

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 5269

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SP, AG, MR

SUBJ: SPANISH-MOROCCAN TALKS ON SAHARA IN MADRID

1. SUMMARY. LITTLE PROGRESS REPORTED IN TALKS ON SAHARA WITH MOROCCAN PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER IN MADRID AUGUST 12, WHICH HELD AT SPANISH INITIATIVE. MOROCCANS REPORTEDLY AGAIN HELD OUT PROSPECTS OF NEGOTIATED SAFEGUARDS FOR BASIC SPANISH INTERESTS IN AREA IF TERRITORIAL QUESTION RESOLVED. WHILE SPANISH IMPRESSED UPON MOROCCANS THEIR DETERMINATION TO PROCEED WITH REFERENDUM IN NEAR FUTURE, THEY ALSO EMPHASIZED THEIR FLEXIBILITY ON REFERENDUM PROCEDURES AND THEIR INTEREST IN CONSIDERING FURTHER MOROCCAN PROPOSALS AND IN FINDING WAY OUT OF IMPASSE FOR KING. FOLLOWING
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MADRID MEETING FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA MADE SECRET

ONE-DAY VISIT TO RABAT AUGUST 18 FOR FURTHER TALKS. SPANISH PERMREP AT UN HAS RETURNED TO NEW YORK AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO ANNOUNCE REFERENDUM PLANS IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. SPANISH BAN ON PRESS COVERAGE OF SAHARAN DISPUTE, WHICH RECENTLY LIFTED BY INFORMATION MINISTRY, HAS NOW BEEN REINSTATED AT PERSONAL DIRECTION OF FRANCO. END SUMMARY.

2. PERSONAL AIDE TO PRIME MINISTER ARIAS NAVARRO HAS GIVEN EMBOFF FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS OF PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S TALKS WITH MOROCCAN PRIME MINISTER OSMAN AND FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI IN MADRID AUGUST 12 AND 13 SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.

3. GOS TOOK INITIATIVE IN INVITING MOROCCANS FOR TALKS IN MADRID BECAUSE IT WISHED TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF RIGIDITY ON SAHARA ISSUE AND BECAUSE IT WAS CONCERNED BY INDICATIONS, SUCH AS THAT CONVEYED BY REPRESENTATIVE OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, THAT SPAIN'S ARAB FRIENDS LINING UP AGAINST HER ONSAHARA ISSUE. SEVERAL HOURS OF WHAT WERE DESCRIBED AS "TOUCH" WORKING SESSIONS WERE HELD AUGUST 13 AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, DURING SUBSEQUENT WORKING LUNCH AND IN INFORMAL AFTERNOON DISCUSSIONS LIMITED TO ARIAS AND CORTINA AND OSMAN AND LARAKI.

4. KEY POINT OF MOROCCAN POSITION WAS THAT SATISFACTORY PROTECTION OF SPANISH INTEREST IN AREA COULD BE NEGOTIATED ONCE KEY PROBLEM OF RECOGNITION OF SAHARA AS MOROCCAN TERRITORY IS RESOLVED. MOROCCANS WARNED THAT SPAIN COULD CONTRIBUTE TO INSTABILITY IN AREA IF IT PERSISTS IN SETTING UP NON-VIABLE PUPPET STATE. CITED EXAMPLE OF RESULTS OF FRENCH CREATION OF MAURITANIA AS LIKELY OUTCOME. WANING OF FRENCH INFLUENCE IN MAURITANIA HAS LED TO DANGEROUS VACUUM WHICH ALGERIANS AND LIBYANS ARE FILLING, WHICH NOT TO THE ADVANTAGE OF EITHER SPAIN OR MOROCCO.

5. MOROCCANS REAFFIRMED THAT IF TERRITORIAL ISSUE RESOLVED THERE COULD BE SOLUTIONS TO QUESTION OF SPANISH MINERAL EXPLOITATIONS AND BASE ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT CANARIES THROUGH SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THEY WARNED MOROCCANS

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WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT REFERENDUM AIMED AT CREATING PUPPET STATE IN AREA, PARTICULARLY IF IT DID NOT ALLOW FOR PARTICIPATION OF 25,000 DISPLACED SAHARANS NOW IN MOROCCO. MOROCCANS CLAIM TO BE AS CONCERNED AS SPANISH OVER PROSPECTS OF MILITARY ACTION IN SAHARA AREA, BUT NOTED THAT WITHOUT SOME SPANISH CONCESSION KING MAY FIND SITUATION VERY DIFFICULT TO CONTROL. FOR MOROCCANS, SPANISH INTENTION TO CREATE SEPARATE STATE FROM

PART OF MOROCCAN TERRITORY WAS AS ILLOGICAL AS WOULD BE
REFERENDUM TO CREATE SEPARATE BASQUE STATE.

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6. SPANISH NEGOTIATORS ARGUED THAT THERE IS NO
TURNING BACK NOW ON REFERENDUM, WHICH IS FULLY IN LINE
WITH UN MANDATE. TO HAND OVER SAHARA POPULATION TO
MOROCCO WOULD VIOLATE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION
PRESCRIBED IN THAT MANDATE. TERMS AND PROCEDURES FOR
REFERENDUM, HOWEVER, VERY MUCH OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AMONG
INTERESTED PARTIES AND WITHIN UN FRAMEWORK. GOS WILLING TO
DISCUSS PARTICIPATION OF 25,000 SAHARAN EXPATRIATES, THOUGH
SAME PRIVILEGE SHOULD IN ALL FAIRNESS BE EXTENDED TO
8-10,000 SAHARANS LIVING IN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO. FONMIN
REJECTED BASQUE SELF-DETERMINATION ANALOGY AS NO MORE APPLICABLE
TO SAHARA ISSUE THAN RIF SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD BE.
SPANISH QUESTIONED INTENT OF MOROCCAN TROOP BUILD-UP ON
SAHARA BORDER, INCLUDING SOME UNITS OF MIDDLE EAST VETERANS.
MOROCCANS DENIED BUILD-UP AIMED AT SPAIN, CITING CONCERN OVER

COMPARABLE BUILD-UP OF ALGERIAN FORCES ON ALGERIAN-SAHARAN
FRONTIER.
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7. ACCORDING TO PRIME MINISTER'S AIDE SPANISH
NEGOTIATORS STRONGLY IMPRESSED ON MOROCCANS SPAIN'S
DETERMINATION TO GO THROUGH REFERENDUM PROMPTLY. BUT
SPANISH ALSO IMPRESSED ON MOROCCANS DETERMINATION TO REMAIN
FLEXIBLE AND OPEN TO MOROCCAN PROPOSALS AND THEIR
SINCERE INTEREST IN DEVELOPING A WAY OUT OF IMPASSE FOR KING
HASSAN. AS FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF SPANISH WILL TO
NEGOTIATE, FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA SUBSEQUENTLY UNDERTOOK
SECRET VISIT TO RABAT AUGUST 18 FOR FURTHER TALKS. WHILE NO
DETAILS AVAILABLE OF CORTINA'S TALKS IN RABAT, THERE REPORTEDLY
WAS NO BREAKTHROUGH AND ON RETURN CORTINA REAFFIRMED PLAN
TO PROCEED WITH REFERENDUM. PRESS COVERAGE OF TALKS AND SAHARAN
DEVELOPMENTS REMAINS SCANTY. WHILE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
LIFTED BAN ON PRESS REPORTING, FRANCO SUBSEQUENTLY MADE
PERSONAL DECISION TO RESTORE IT LEST MOROCCANS BE ANTAGONIZED.

8. SPANISH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT UN, JAIME DE PINIES,
VISITED SAHARA WHILE IN SPAIN DURING RECENT CONSULTATION.
DE PINIES HAS NOW RETURNED TO NEW YORK AND IS PREPARED TO
NOTIFY UN SECRETARY GENERAL WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS THAT SPAIN
INTENDS TO HOLD REFERENDUM IN SAHARA. MEANWHILE, SPANISH FORCES
IN SAHARA AND IN CANARIES REMAIN IN ALERT STATUS. GOS WOULD
PREFER TO HAVE REFERENDUM ANNOUNCED AND PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY
BEFORE ANOTHER DEBATE OF SAHARA ISSUE BECOMES NECESSARY
IN FORTHCOMING UNGA SESSION.

9. PRIM MINISTERIAL AIDE INSISTED THAT SAHARAN ISSUE
NOW WIDELY REGARDED AS SERIOUS LIABILITY WITHIN COUNCILS
OF GOS AND THAT ANY SOLUTION SHORT OF SIMPLE TRANSFER OF
TERRITORY TO MOROCCO WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE--INCLUDING VOTE FOR
AFFILIATION WITH MOROCCO IN FORTHCOMING REFERENDUM. CHIEF
PROBLEM IS THAT MOST SAHARAN SHEIKS AND NEARLY ALL SAHARANS
IN MONEY ECONOMY, INCREASINGLY AWARE OF FUTURE RICHES THAT WILL
ACCRUE TO THEM THROUGH EXPLOITATION OF PHOSPHATES AND OTHER
VALUABLE MINERALS RECENTLY DISCOVERED IF THERE IS CONTINUED
ASSOCIATION WITH SPAIN. AS THEY SEE IT, CHOICE IS EITHER TO
BECOME ANOTHER KUWAIT OR BE ABSORBED BY MOROCCO, WHICH
SAHARANS ALLEGEDLY FEEL WOULD LEAVE THEM AS POOREST PROVINCE
OF POOR COUNTRY. AIDE COMMENTED THAT SAHARAN SHEIKS BELIEVE
ANTIMOROCCAN SENTIMENT SHARED BY SIZEABLE PERCENTAGE OF SAHARANS
ON MOROCCAN SIDE OF THE BORDER AND ARE CONVINCED THAT THEIR
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VOTE IN REFERENDUM WOULD NOT BE OVERWHELMINGLY PRO-MOROCCAN,
AS RABAT ASSUMES.
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